



**ROYAL NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF
TRADE, INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES**

The Minister of Trade and Industry

Minister Roland Lescure

Your ref

Our ref

Date

23/7388-

30 November 2023

Dear Minister Roland Lescure,

First of all, thank you so much for coming to Norway in October and my deepest apologies for not being able to meet you myself.

I am so happy we have agreed to enhance our cooperation through a partnership and that we will present it at the FR-NO Green Industry Forum 16 January in Paris. My team will shortly send your cabinet a draft of a framework for this cooperation. Together we will give direction to our partnership where several areas within the green transition can potentially deepen our cooperation. I am writing to you because of my great concern for the challenging market situation the European solar industry is facing. I envisage solar PV as a natural part of our cooperation, and I would propose we put this on the agenda for our meeting in Paris.

Both France and Norway have made clear commitments to produce more solar energy. Considering the geopolitical developments over the last few years, the EU also seeks to secure solar PV manufacturing capacity within Europe.

The Norwegian solar industry can play an important role in building up the European solar industry, given its expertise and experience. Reaching our common goals requires that we build on the strong European actors who are already established and have experience and expertise in this field. But as the situation is today, we are risking losing out on this opportunity. Just during the last year, we have lost strategic important companies for establishing the European solar PV value chain.

In August the company Norwegian Crystals decided to end their production of ingots in Norway and just a couple of weeks ago the company REC Solar, which has been an

essential supplier of solar grade pure silicon to the solar industry, decided to stop their production activity in Norway. This is to a large extent due to the difficult market situation in Europe. Their process is unique worldwide as they use only kerf from wafer process as a raw material. Unless rapid action is taken, the unique expertise REC Solar held will slowly but steadily disappear.

One important player still operating is Norsun, and I am very pleased to see that they will take part in the Solar Ministerial Meeting. Norsun is a well-established Norwegian ingot and wafer-manufacturer, and the only producer of ingots and wafers outside of China. They started production in 2005 and has an annual manufacturing capacity of 800 MW. Norsun is planning to scale up production at their Norwegian site incrementally to 4 GW. The company also plan on building production capacity outside of Norway.

I am mentioning these three examples to illustrate what Europe has and what we may be about to lose. In my view, it is not possible to solve the challenges facing the European solar industry solely by using unilateral policy tools. Therefore, I am glad that this will be discussed at the Ministerial Meeting of The European Solar PV Industry Alliance (ESIA). Several measures are being proposed and Norway will take active part in finding the well-targeted ones which will help the current situation on both short and long term. Europe shall compete on economic, environmental and social sustainability. Moreover, we should take advantage of our competence in producing better, more efficient products, as well as producing renewable energy and electrifying our societies.

As Norway is chosen as partner country for Hannover Messe 2024, we will also use this opportunity to call for more bilateral cooperation on solar PV. I hope to see you there and hope that Hannover Messe could be an opportunity for us to do collaborate to give solar PV industry visibility.

I look forward to seeing you in January in Paris and to further discuss how we best can cooperate to adress the situation facing our European solar PV value chain.

Yours sincerely



Jan Christian Vestre